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Men's Basketball Preview: Eagles Cap Road Swing at Arkansas State

Tipoff is set for 8:05 p.m. ET on ESPN3.

Marc Gignac



Mark Wagner

Men's Basketball | 1/29/2016 4:27:00 PM

Story Links

Georgia Southern (7-12, 3-6) vs. Arkansas State (10-10, 6-3)

Saturday, Jan. 30 - Convocation Center (10,038) – 8:05 p.m. ET

[Live Audio](#) | [Live Video](#) | [Live Stats](#)

TV: [ESPN3](#)

Radio: 103.7 WBMZ-FM (Statesboro/Metter/Swainsboro), 102.1 WZAT-FM (Savannah), 1370 WLOP-AM (Jesup)

Series: Georgia Southern leads 7-3, W5

Last meeting: 2/12/2015, W 65-60 (H)

Probable Starters:

#2 [Mike Hughes](#)

#3 [Ike Smith](#)

#4 [Tookie Brown](#)

#10 [Jake Allsmiller](#)

#14 [Coye Simmons](#)

Layup Line

- Georgia Southern caps a four-game road trip with a contest at Arkansas State Saturday. The game will be broadcast live on ESPN3.
- It's the first of two games against Arkansas State this season.
- Georgia Southern caps a stretch in which the Eagles play three games in six days.
- Georgia Southern is 2-3 in its last five contests and coming off an 80-67 loss at first-place Little Rock Thursday.
- Georgia Southern freshman [Tookie Brown](#) is ranked in the top-10 in the Sun Belt in scoring (5th, 17.5 ppg), assists (7th, 3.3 apg), steals (2nd, 2.1) and assist/turnover ratio (6th, 1.6).
- Brown became the first freshman to score 30-plus points in a game at Georgia Southern. He netted 34 at Appalachian State Monday.
- Brown has scored 20-plus points in six games and reached double figures in 18 of 19 contests, including the last 17.
- Brown (17.5 ppg) is half of the second-highest scoring freshman duo in the country. He and [Ike Smith](#) (12.5 ppg) combine to average 30 points a game.
- Georgia Southern is 2-9 on the road this season and has lost six of its last seven on the road.
- With 11 of 12 scholarship student-athletes who are freshmen, redshirt freshmen or sophomores (92 percent), Georgia Southern has the highest percentage of underclassmen on its current roster of the 345 NCAA Division I squads. Liberty (91 percent), Ohio State (85 percent), Fairleigh Dickinson (85 percent) and Wyoming (80 percent) round out the top 5.
- Georgia Southern lost 76 percent of its scoring and 72 percent of its rebounding from last season.
- The Eagles were picked 10th in the Preseason Sun Belt Conference Coaches Poll.
- Arkansas State is 2-3 in its last five and coming off a 75-69 overtime win at home over Georgia State Thursday night.
- The Red Wolves are 8-2 at home and 4-1 in home Sun Belt games.
- Arkansas State was picked fourth in the Preseason Sun Belt Coaches Poll, and Anthony Livingston was named preseason first-team all-league.
- Devin Carter leads the Red Wolves in scoring with 17.2 points a game, and Livingston averages 15.2 points and 9.4 rebounds.

The Series

- This will be the 11th meeting in the all-time series, which began in 1956. Georgia Southern owns a 7-3 edge and has won the last five.
- The Eagles are 3-2 on the road against the Red Wolves and have won the last two.
- Georgia Southern swept the season series against Arkansas State last year.
- **Last Meeting - 2/12/2015 - Hanner:** [Jelani Hewitt](#) scored 15 points and set the Georgia Southern career free throws made record to lead the Eagles to a 65-60 win over Arkansas State.
- Hewitt set the mark during a pivotal 7-2 Georgia Southern run which saw the senior score all seven points. After Arkansas State trimmed a 12-point deficit to five, Hewitt hit a jumper, drilled the two record-setting free throws and capped the stretch with a long 3-pointer.
- Hewitt passed Elton Nesbitt who had 353 free throws from 2003-06. He hit four of his five free throws tonight while the Eagles struggled as a team from the charity stripe, making just 5-of-15.
- The Red Wolves made a final push and got the margin down to five points with under a minute to go, but Hewitt was there again to hit a floater and put the lead back to seven points with 37 seconds left.
- [Trent Wiedeman](#) posted 14 points and six rebounds for Georgia Southern, and [Curtis Diamond](#) collected 11 points and nine rebounds. [Angel Matias](#) chipped in 10 points and six rebounds, and Hewitt added five rebounds, four assists and three steals with 11 of his points coming in the second half.
- Nouhoum Bocoum posted 18 points and 11 rebounds to lead Arkansas State, and Anthony Livingston finished with 16 points and 16 boards. Sean Gardner scored 10.
- The Eagles took control of the game with a 13-5 run, capped by consecutive dunks by Hewitt and Ferguson, to open a 50-38 lead with 11:07 left in the contest. Livingston scored four points, and Gardner hit a 3-pointer in an 11-4 Red Wolves run that made it a five-point game with 6:09 to play.
- Georgia Southern held Arkansas State to 42 percent shooting from the floor, and the Red Wolves made just 8-of-18 from the free-throw stripe.
- **Last time in the Convo Center - 1/8/2015:** After playing one of the lowest scoring games in recent history, Georgia Southern rolled to a 73-61 win over Arkansas State .
- The Eagles were led by 18 points from [Jelani Hewitt](#) who also added five rebounds and two steals.
- The Eagles rattled off a 24-0 run early in the first half en route to leading 41-26 at halftime and didn't look back in the second period.

- [Curtis Diamond](#) scored his first collegiate double-double with 12 points and a career-best 10 rebounds. [Angel Matias](#) and [Eric Ferguson](#) each scored 11 points with both players scoring 4-of-7 from the field. Matias had eight rebounds, and Ferguson pulled six boards.
- Arkansas State was led by 17 points from Cameron Golden, while PJ Hardwick had 12, and Anthony Livingston scored 5-of-15 from the field for 11 points.
- [Jake Allsmiller](#) got his first collegiate start and nailed a big three-pointer to give Georgia Southern an early 3-0 lead. The Red Wolves tied the game shortly thereafter, but a 24-0 run by the visitors gave the Eagles a big lead throughout the first half.
- Midway through the second period, Arkansas State made a run to cut the lead back to 10 points, but the Eagles answered that, pushing the lead back to 19 in the final five minutes. A late 9-0 run by the home side gave the local fans hope, but good free-throw shooting iced the victory.

Team Storylines

- The Eagles are led in scoring by a pair of freshmen in [Tookie Brown](#) and [Ike Smith](#). The last time a freshman led Georgia Southern in scoring was the 1999-2000 season, when the school's all-time scoring leader, Julius Jenkins, led the Eagles with 15.5 points a game. Elton Nesbitt averaged 15.7 points a game to lead the Eagles in scoring as a newcomer to the program in 2003-04, but it was his sophomore season after spending a year at Compton Community College.
- Brown and Smith average 30.0 points a game combined, making them the second-highest freshmen scoring duo in the country. Dwayne Bacon and Malik Beasley of Florida State (31.5 ppg) lead the nation.
- The Eagles 101-100 win over Appalachian State Jan. 25 was their first win when allowing 100 points since a 112-104 triumph over Old Dominion Jan. 7, 1978. It was just the third time Georgia Southern has won a game when conceding 100 points (135-109 vs. Piedmont, 2/24/1951 and 110-106 vs. Samford, 1/20/1975)
- Georgia Southern is averaging 9.7 turnovers in its last seven games (68 total).
- The Eagles lost their first Sun Belt game after leading at halftime at Georgia State Tuesday, Jan. 19 (11-1).
- Under [Mark Byington](#), Georgia Southern is 31-5 in games when leading at half and 38-1 when leading with five minutes to go.
- Since joining the Sun Belt in 2014, 13 Georgia Southern league games have been decided by five points or less, and the Eagles are 8-6.
- The Eagles are averaging 78.1 points a game this season and have scored 80-plus points in seven games and 100-plus in three contests. Georgia Southern scored 80-plus points in six contests last year.
- Eleven different Eagles have scored 10 or more points in a game this season.
- Georgia Southern is 17-5 in Hanner Fieldhouse in its last 23 contests there.

- Georgia Southern posted a 4-6 record in the non-conference portion of its schedule.
- Georgia Southern has used nine different combinations of starting lineups this season.
- The Eagles played their Sun Belt opener on the road for the second straight season. Georgia Southern is 0-2 in Sun Belt openers.
- Georgia Southern played its first ranked opponent since 2008 when the Eagles traveled to No. 7/6 Duke Dec. 15. Their last game against a ranked opponent was also at Duke Nov. 11, 2008.
- Georgia Southern's 21 steals against Bob Jones (11/30) was one shy of the school record set against Little Rock in 1981 and tied against The Citadel in 2004.
- After not playing an SEC opponent since a 78-75 loss to Auburn Dec. 30, 2011, the Eagles have faced two this season. Georgia Southern fell 82-72 at Ole Miss Nov. 16 and 92-62 at Auburn Nov. 20.
- Georgia Southern's 116 points in a 116-49 season-opening win over Webber International Nov. 13 were tied for the 16th most all-time and the most since a 116-73 neutral site win over UC Davis Nov. 12, 2006, which was the 2006-07 season opener.
- The Eagles' 40 3-point attempts tied for the second-the most in school history (West Georgia, 1/2/1992).